

He had no formal musical training, but he taught himself to play most any musical instrument that he could get his hands on. His wife was a trained musician and together they formed a band with Tilly on piano and Dan on the drums. They played together at the ice shows in Clinton and all the big jobs from New Haven to New London. And after each gig, they always loved to go out dancing.

Eventually, Tilly retired from performing, but Dan carried on and fronted a band that played at restaurants and resorts along the Connecticut shoreline, various jazz festivals, nursing homes, schools, and of course Bill's Seafood Restaurant on Sunday evenings. Whenever anyone asked why he was still performing, Mr. Vece would always say that his doctor told him that music was the best medicine and he should keep on playing as long as possible.

Well, Dan Vece followed his doctor's orders, and as a result he brought happiness into the lives of countless individuals. Dan Vece, Sr.'s good humor, devotion to his community and remarkable vitality made him a beloved figure in Clinton and throughout Connecticut. He was loved and revered by all, and he will be dearly missed.●

#### VETERANS' BENEFITS ACT OF 1997

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, as the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am enormously pleased that the Senate is considering S. 714, as amended, a bill that would make valuable changes to a number of veterans benefits and services. In the waning days of this session, the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees were able to reach compromise on a wide range of programs and services for veterans—from programs to assist homeless veterans, to providing home loans to Native American veterans, and I urge my colleagues to give their unanimous support to this measure. It is particularly fitting that we make these improvements for veterans programs now, as Veterans Day is just a few days away.

Mr. President, because all the provisions of this measure—which I will refer to as the “compromise agreement”—are set forth in the joint explanatory statement which Senator SPECTER will place in the RECORD, I will discuss here only some of the issues which are of particular interest to me. The explanatory statement was developed in cooperation with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and that Committee's Chairman, BOB STUMP, will insert the same explanatory statement in the RECORD when the House considers this measure.

#### EXTENDING AND IMPROVING THE NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING LOAN PILOT PROGRAM

Mr. President, section 201 of the compromise agreement will extend for four years the authority for the Native American Housing Loan Pilot Program, under section 3761, title 38, Unit-

ed States Code. This pilot program was created in 1993 to provide loans to eligible Native American veterans to purchase, build, or improve dwellings on Native American trust lands. This program is so important because commercial lenders will not finance the purchase of homes on Native American lands, as lenders cannot foreclose in the event of default. Therefore, the traditional VA loan guaranty program is not, in effect, available to Native American veterans residing on tribal lands.

This program has been very successful in financing purchases of homes by Pacific Islanders. However, it has been somewhat underutilized by other Native American populations. Therefore, this bill would also provide for enhanced outreach by VA to inform Native American veterans of the availability of this program. It further tasks VA with analyzing what is working and what could be improved in its administration of the program.

I would like to commend Senators AKAKA and CAMPBELL for their tireless advocacy on behalf of Native American veterans.

#### REINVENTING VA'S EEO SYSTEM

Title I of the compromise agreement will establish a new employment discrimination complaint system of the VA. This provision ensures that the employees who perform equal employment and opportunity (EEO) counseling and investigations are professional and independent by creating a new office to adjudicate complaints, separate from line management.

The Committee has had grave concerns about how VA has handled several high profile EEO complaints filed against senior staff members. Therefore, this bill also provides for VA to submit a separate report regarding complaints filed against senior level employees, based on their personal conduct. I believe it is critical that VA's actions be subject to Congressional scrutiny, in order to assure accountability.

I want to thank Senator GRAHAM for his leadership on this important issue.

#### SPINA BIFIDA ELIGIBILITY CLARIFIED

Mr. President, section 404 of the compromise agreement will clarify the eligibility—for compensation, health care, and educational assistance—of the children with spina bifida born to Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange. Currently, the eligibility of the child is determined by looking to the veteran father. However, under title 38 of the United States Code, a former service member who received a dishonorable discharge is generally not considered a veteran, and is therefore not eligible for veterans benefits from the VA.

It was Congress' intention to provide benefits to all Vietnam veterans' children with spina bifida. Congress did not mean to exclude the children of veterans with dishonorable discharges.

This provision will clarify the eligibility criteria to include the child with

spina bifida of a Vietnam veteran regardless of the character of his discharge. This is a minor modification in the law, but to the children who suffer from spina bifida, these benefits can make a significant difference in their lives. These benefits can improve their quality of health care, provide educational opportunities, and enhance their quality of life. It would be great injustice if these children were denied these benefits because of their father's discharge status.

#### MAMMOGRAPHY POLICY

Section 208 of the compromise agreement seeks to address a discrepancy between VA's stated principles and their clinical practice with respect to breast cancer programs. Though a guiding principle of the Veterans Health Administration states that “the quality of care in VHA must be demonstratively equal to, or better than, what is available in the local community,” in my view, VHA's breast cancer detection policy fails to achieve community standards because it only targets women between the ages of 50 to 69.

Mr. President, it is very important that veterans have access to preventive diagnostic tests to protect their health. Because breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer in women, I look forward to receiving VA's national policy on breast cancer detection.

I thank Senator SPECTER for his leadership on this issue.

#### HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. President, I am pleased that the authority for the Health Professional Scholarship Program has been extended for one year. Aspiring health professionals have a strong interest in the scholarship program, and it has proven to be an effective recruitment tool for the VA in the past. Staffing analyses done within the VA have identified a need to increase the levels of nurse practitioners and physician assistants to adjust to the shift from inpatient to outpatient care, and this program is well suited to assist individuals in these career paths. We will continue to evaluate this program and look for other opportunities that will increase both recruitment and retention of health professionals in the VA.

#### MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECTS CONSTRUCTION AUTHORIZATION

Of the projects authorized under Title III of this bill, I am especially pleased that we have included the authorizations for projects in Northern California. I have been concerned that veterans in Northern California have not been receiving convenient VA health care services ever since the Martinez VA Medical Center was closed in 1991.

The conference agreement authorizes VA to move ahead with plans to create an accessible network of VA health care by specifically authorizing funds for upgrades and enhancements to McClellan Hospital at Mather Field in

Sacramento and improvements to the outpatient clinics at Mare Island in Vallejo and at Martinez. Once the McClellan Hospital is completed, VA expects capacity for 55 inpatient beds and 110,000 outpatient visits per year, and the projected workload for the outpatient clinics will exceed 140,000 outpatient visits per year.

#### CONCLUSION

Mr. President, in closing, I acknowledge the work of my colleagues in the House—Chairman BOB STUMP and ranking Minority Member Lane Evans—and our Committee's Chairman, Senator SPECTER, in developing this comprehensive legislation.

Mr. President, I thank the staff who have worked extremely long and hard on this compromise—Mike Durishin, Jill Cochran, Mary Ellen McCarthy, Adam Sachs, Susan Edgerton, Carl Commenor, Pat Ryan, Mike Brinck, Ralph Ibsen, Kingston Smith, Sloan Rappoport, and others on the House Committee, and Jim Gottlieb, Kim Lipsky, Mary Schoelen, Charlie Battaglia, Bill Tuerk, and John Bradley, with the Senate Committee. I also thank Bob Cover and Charlie Armstrong of the House and Senate Offices of Legislative Counsel for their excellent assistance and support in drafting this compromise agreement.●

#### TRIBUTE TO BERNARD G. SEGAL

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to one of the greatest lawyers in recent American history—Bernard G. Segal, who died earlier this year. Bernard Segal, who served as the president of the American Bar Association in 1969–70, was known as the conscience of the bar, and some of his colleagues said that he promoted individual rights and the rule of law more than any other lawyer of our time.

Bernard Segal's legal accomplishments began at an early age, as he was named directly out of Penn Law School to serve as deputy attorney general of Pennsylvania. At age 24, he was the youngest person to ever hold this post, but he still proceeded to write many important pieces of legislation, including the State's banking code. He left this position to be a founding partner of the Philadelphia law firm of Schnader, Harrison, Segal & Lewis. As a member of the firm, he was very successful, representing many blue-chip clients such as Bell Telephone, NBC, and United Parcel, and during his career he argued nearly 50 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. As a result of his legal prowess, Mr. Segal was tapped to serve as the chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar and president of the American Bar Association, becoming the first Jewish man to serve in either post.

Mr. Segal continually dedicated himself to legal causes, and one of his most successful crusades was his mission to improve the selection process for federal judges. As chairman of the ABA's

standing committee on the Federal Judiciary, Mr. Segal helped to persuade President Eisenhower to establish the practice of submitting prospective Federal judicial appointments to the ABA for review. In order to convince the President of the need for this procedure, Mr. Segal asked the former general this simple question: "Would you appoint a general without asking the colonels what they thought of him?"

Bernard Segal's legal career was truly exemplary, but what made this man so extraordinary was his commitment to helping the less fortunate members of our society. Mr. Segal described the hallmark of the law firm that he helped found as its "dedication to the higher calling," that is "the lawyer's obligation to assume an active role in the pursuit of a just and ordered society, in helping to solve the emerging problems of social, economic and political importance \* \* \* to serve the public as his or her client, as she or he would serve a full-paying client."

Mr. Segal's commitment to preserving equal justice under the law for all Americans particularly shone during the civil rights movement. In the 1960's, many people in the country viewed civil rights as a Southern problem, one over which they had little influence or control. Fortunately, Bernard Segal did not share this view.

In 1963, when Alabama Governor George Wallace announced that he would disregard the Federal court order that prohibited interference with the admission of African-American students at the University of Alabama, Bernard Segal saw the need for the Nation's legal community to speak out publicly against the Governor's actions. He quickly got 46 prominent lawyers, including three former U.S. Attorneys General, to sign a public letter condemning the Governor's defiance of the law.

Shortly afterward, President Kennedy announced that he was creating a group known as the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and the President named Bernard Segal as one of the organization's two co-chairmen. This committee of 246 private lawyers helped build support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and its call for peaceful compliance with court orders had a persuasive impact on future integration efforts in the South.

In the wake of the civil rights movement, Bernard Segal remained socially active. President Johnson chose him to head the National Legal Service Program, which established legal services for the poor. And much like he did at his own law firm, Mr. Segal worked diligently to enlist lawyers to provide legal assistance for the indigent.

Bernard Segal's efforts did not go unrecognized. Among his many honors were the American Bar Association's Gold Medal, the National Civil Rights Award by the U.S. Attorney General, the National Human Relations Award by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Judge William H.

Hastie Award by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and the World Peace Through Law Award as the "World's Greatest Lawyer."

Bernard Segal represented the highest standards and ideals of the legal profession, and all those who were fortunate enough to know this great man will miss him dearly. He is survived by his wife, Geraldine, his daughter Loretta, his son Richard, three grandchildren, one great-grandchild, his brother, and his sister. I offer my heartfelt condolences to them all.

#### REAUTHORIZING THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION RESEARCH, ENGINEERING AND DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleagues for working with me over the past few weeks, and in particular the past few days, to enact legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Research, Engineering, and Development (R,E&D) account for fiscal years 1998 and 1999.

Senators MCCAIN, HOLLINGS, and FORD joined me in introducing this important legislation. The Commerce Committee recently took up the House bill and reported it out with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The leadership of the Senate Commerce Committee and the House Science Committee have already met to resolve the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. I am pleased to report that the floor amendment to H.R. 1271 reflects the agreement that the conferees have reached on a final package. The House should be able to accept and approve H.R. 1271, as amended, before this session ends.

The FAA R,E&D account finances projects to improve the safety, security, capacity and efficiency of the U.S. aviation system. These significant research and development efforts include the development of new fire-resistant insulation materials for use on aircraft, the development of procedures for enhancing terminal area capacity and safety, the improvement of aircraft collision avoidance technology, and a host of other noteworthy projects.

This bill also fosters the strong public-private partnership that has been established in the aviation research and development area. The FAA, for instance, is working with Boeing to develop a world-class airport pavement testing facility. Boeing is providing one-third of the costs of this project, which total \$21 million. This project will help ensure that the U.S. keeps pace with the rest of the world in developing the infrastructure to accommodate the new super jumbo aircraft.

Again, I commend my colleagues' commitment, and their assistance with this effort.●